



Evesham Township School District

Meland Administration Building, 25 South Maple Avenue, Marlton, NJ 08053

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Dr. Justin Smith, Superintendent
Mr. John Recchinti, School Business Administrator

Ms. Danielle T. Magulick, Director of Curriculum & Instruction
Mr. Richard G. Dantine, Jr., Director of Personnel

March 5, 2021

Dear ETSD Families,

“Alone we can do so little, together we can do so much.”

-- Helen Keller

This quote was shared with me by a staff member back in January when I solicited suggestions for a new phrase for future updates (remember the prior ETSD Updates phrase “Every day of learning is something to celebrate”?). This quote from Helen Keller speaks to me on multiple levels given all our challenges now and ahead.

Highlights this week: Women’s History Month; Point of Light: NJ School Staff Now Eligible for Vaccination; 2021-22 Budget Info; Careful Expansion of In-Person Learning; Free Meals Reminder; and Community Activities Page Update.

Women’s History Month

Rather than lead off with a specific historical figure, I am thinking of the countless, unsung, absolutely essential contributions by women today, yesterday, every century back into the fog of recorded time. I think of my mom, who made my PB&J before I, backpack in hand, left for my school, and she left for hers, for over forty years, as a guidance counselor and eventually as a superintendent in Maple Shade, lifting up children all along the way.

A leader once started a meeting I attended by asking: “Let’s think of who we’ve each been influenced by. Among those names and faces, think of one woman in particular. What is her name? How did she help you? Does she know that she did?” I think these are great questions for anyone, anytime.

Point of Light: NJ School Staff Now Eligible for Vaccination

Governor Murphy announced on Monday the expansion of eligibility for more frontline essential workers and high-risk groups in New Jersey’s COVID-19 vaccination program. Eligible groups now include educators and staff in pre-k through 12th grade settings, childcare workers, and transportation workers, among others.

<https://www.nj.gov/governor/news/news/562021/20210301a.shtml>



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2021-22 Budget Info

The [Preliminary 2021-22 Budget Presentation](#) from our February Board meeting linked here is located on our district website under the Business Office Budget and Finance webpage. The Board meeting's live stream is viewable here [ETSD Board Meeting 2.25.21](#) on Youtube, as are all our meetings.

Please attend or tune in to our Board meeting on Thursday, March 11, at 7 pm, when we will present the tentative 2021-22 budget and recommend it for Board approval to be submitted to the County Office of Education for review. *Final budget approval takes place at our May 6 Board meeting.* Our district must cut more money from our upcoming budget than in any year prior. The March 11 tentative budget presentation will expand on the February 25 preliminary budget presentation, and include details about the elimination of 45 staff positions, as well as additional information about the SRO ballot question and transportation changes.

All budgetary steps are being proposed only due to our dire financial challenges. The deeper the cuts go, the more critical every bit of savings becomes. And, looming in the background, is a projected \$1.6 million reduction in state aid next year, followed by two more years of state funding reductions after that.

Our communication of our 2021-22 budget is a multi-stage process over months, from February to May, to allow for input and conversation from all stakeholders. Questions came this week regarding transportation, which I will address at our March 11 Board meeting. The health and safety of our children is absolutely vital. The safety of each walking route will be assured through steps including guidance and safety measures such as crossing guards arranged through our police department, as well through as central administration and principals developing plans to help students cross school property safely. All parents continue to have the option to drop off and/or pick up at school, and busing continues to be an option in Colts Run via a limited pilot of subscription busing, to gauge whether to expand it in future years. Since the subscription busing cost of \$350 per student is less than the yearly cost of transporting a student by bus, greater savings are achieved through increasing walking.



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Careful Expansion of In-Person Learning

Superintendents from our county, I among them, met with the Deputy Chief of Staff from Governor Murphy's Office on Monday to communicate the urgent need for clear, consistent alternatives to the 6 foot social distancing guidance, given the increase in vaccinations among other factors, that will support districts in getting more students into school for more time. Our district took a positive step by returning to our full day schedule on Monday. Most districts use an early dismissal schedule.

Each day, we are carefully examining our classrooms for opportunities to safely bring in more students. This takes time, and we are making progress. At the same time, there will likely not be room for all students to return to all days of in-person learning, given the current CDC, NJ Dept. of Health, and NJ Dept. of Education guidance. Thank you for your patience with this process. The most recent NJ COVID Activity Level report shows continued decrease in our Southwest region but increases elsewhere.

https://www.nj.gov/health/cd/documents/topics/NCOV/COVID_19_Report_Week_2021_8.pdf

Free Meals Reminder

All ETSD students (and nationwide) may receive free breakfast and regular lunch (no a la carte) all year through a program supported by the US Department of Agriculture and at no cost to our district. The meals are ordered just like all our meals. In-person meals are ordered in school by the students. Meals for remote students and for Remote Learning Wednesdays are ordered via MyPaymentsPlus (linked on our homepage) and are delivered each Wednesday. For more information on this program:

<https://www.usda.gov/media/press-releases/2020/10/09/trump-administration-extends-free-meals-kids-entire-school-year>

Community Activities Page Update

Please see the latest community page addition, regarding Marlton Baseball & Softball Camp. https://www.evesham.k12.nj.us/community/community_activities

Sincerely,

Dr. Justin Smith
Superintendent of Schools